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We Are Not (Yet) Nonbinary

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ABSTRACT I am addressing this paper to other white temporarily-able-bodied settler feminists interested in moving, not just toward a queer (queerer?) horizon, but toward a nonbinary liberatory futurity as a collective political aspiration (not an identitarian goal of self-actualization). In this paper, I consider how we might mobilize the nonbinary as a freedom practice, a practice building toward a future where we are all free. Imagining and creating a liberatory inclusive future necessarily requires dismantling the constrictions of reproductive futurity, constrictions built on binary analytics. This paper begins with an outline of how a sense of urgency, legal and medicalized frameworks, and anti-victimism have dominated post- Dobbs responses and reinvigorated an allegiance to retrograde, repressive reproductive futurity. This brief discussion of post-Dobbs responses sets the stage for an exploration of a more expansive, inclusive, collective futurity beyond the settler state, a freer futurity made possible by mobilizing a nonbinary intersectional critique anchored in queer/crip/Indigenous analytics.

KEYWORDS ableism, crip, futurity, nonbinary, queer, reproductive justice, settler colonialism

> "Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. The future is queerness's domain."
> – José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*[1]

Since José Muñoz declared us as not yet queer, we have also not yet achieved many other designations, in spite of loudly self-proclaiming them (my address is largely to queer white able-bodied scholar-activists). Especially in academic

spaces, we like to declare ourselves: decolonial, intersectional, accessible, inclusive . . . And of late we increasingly talk about being nonbinary, even as we clearly remain trapped in dichotomies, dualisms, and binaries. We have not (have we earned Muñoz' "yet;" is "yet" too prescriptive?) embraced nonnormativity, unassimilation, unrecognizability, disidentification, noncompliance, failure, unproductivity, refusal in our relationship with the US state. Our imaginaries are constrained by fantasies of a benevolent settler state and teleological progress narratives, both of which undergird notions of American reproductive futurity. Regardless of whatever radical politics we claim, deep down many of us still "desire the state's desire,"[2] and that captures us in the perpetual dichotomies of white supremacist, settler colonial, capitalist, ableist, heteropatriarchal frames.

I am addressing this article primarily to other white temporarily-able-bodied settler feminists interested in moving, not just toward a queer (queerer?) horizon, but toward a nonbinary liberatory futurity as a collective political aspiration (not an identitarian goal of self-actualization). My rationale for imagining similarly positioned feminists as my target audience is that we often hold positions of power in which we (re)produce the violences of the binary. Instead of writing toward an abstract audience, I am trying to implicate myself, "collect my cousins," practice "calling-in." In what follows, I consider how we might mobilize the nonbinary as a freedom practice, a practice building toward a future where we are all free. Imagining and creating a liberatory inclusive future necessarily requires dismantling the constrictions of reproductive futurity, constrictions built on binary analytics.

Pushing past oppressive reproductive futurity into a freer future requires attending to who we imagine the future is for, what life matters generations ahead. Imagining future life clearly ties to issues of reproductive justice/freedom, issues that have been brought into stark relief with the overturning of Roe v. Wade via the Dobbs decision and subsequent abortion bans. Whitestream feminist responses to the Dobbs decision and its aftermath highlight our continued

allegiance to binary thinking and resistance to embracing, not just nonbinary people, but nonbinary practice and analytics—practices that enable us to build toward an expansive, inclusive future.

This paper begins with an outline of how a sense of urgency, legal and medicalized frameworks, and anti-victimism have dominated post-Dobbs responses and reinvigorated an allegiance to retrograde, repressive reproductive futurity. We are clearly not yet queer, but also seem to be doubling down with our binary selves. This brief discussion of post-Dobbs responses can be considered a sort of case study revealing this regressive binarism. It could stand on its own as a critique of post-Dobbs responses, but I wanted to stretch beyond a critical stance toward alternative possibilities. In doing this, I move from a more traditional analytical format, in which my analysis is foregrounded, to a more exploratory stance. In the balance of the paper, I work to step to the side, highlighting the work of queer, crip and Indigenous scholars without pretending to be able to neatly tie it all together.

The first section of this article, "Post-Dobbs Resurgent Reproductive Futurity," establishes how the confines of the binary still hamper our actions and imaginaries. As such, it sets the stage for a necessary exploration of a more expansive, inclusive, collective futurity beyond the settler state, a freer futurity made possible by mobilizing a nonbinary intersectional critique anchored in queer, crip, Indigenous analytics. I marshal these analytics because they are derived from the lived experience of those never meant to inhabit the future. They are not exhaustive of frameworks that help dismantle regressive binarism but are three that, in concert with each other, are particularly challenging to me as a white temporarily-able-bodied settler feminist. The second section, "Reproductive Justice and Queer/Crip/Indigenous Futurities," explores how these overlapping analytics provide generative space to push beyond the biopolitics and biocapitalism that fuel reproductive futurity, and to notice how those logics can sneak back into reproductive justice frameworks.

Queer/Crip/Indigenous futurities are so generative partly because of their nonlinear, dynamic, animate, nonbinary, relational conceptions of temporality and spatiality. “Queer/Crip/Indigenous Spacetime” builds from the previous section providing a gloss of how these intersecting analytics stretch our imaginaries of the time, space, and collectivity we are working to liberate (post-Dobbs it should be clear even to the most privileged of us that collective liberation, not savior politics, is the order of the day).

In the final section, “Desiring Otherwise and the Nonbinary,” I consider the work nonbinary does that differentiates it from the alternative constructs of “neither/nor” and “both/and.” I circle back to Muñoz’s queer horizon and demonstrate the nonbinary potential within queer/crip/Indigenous analytics making spacetime to desire otherwise into expansive liberatory futurities. Ultimately, I hope to invite others who are similarly situated to recognize the generative possibility of these combined analytics to disrupt dominant biopolitical, biocapitalist settler temporality which violently advances through reproductive futurity, including the elimination of Natives, crips, queers.

Post-Dobbs Resurgent Reproductive Futurity

In the late 1990s, women of color organized a political movement beyond whitestream reproductive rights, defining reproductive justice as “the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”[3] In the current post-Dobb’s landscape, we are implicitly or explicitly told that the urgency of the moment requires that we *not* think more capaciously about what reproductive justice might look like. We have been here before. The perceived urgency of a political and/or legal campaign becomes justification for cutting corners, not being accountable, throwing the most vulnerable under the bus.

Urgency has been identified as one of the main characteristics of white supremacist culture, along with binary thinking. On her *White Supremacy Culture* website, Tema Okun asserts that a sense of urgency "makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think and act long-term, and/or to consider consequences of whatever action we take." The way that urgency forecloses a deeper understanding of long time becomes clearer in the discussion of queer/crip/Indian spacetime. Further, and particularly relevant post-Dobbs, Okun says urgency "frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of BIPOC people and communities in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)."[4]

Urgency fuels a compulsion to try to "get the law to say 'good' things" about us,[5] which in turn leads to centering the most normative and/or most "innocent" in our communities—normativity and innocence being well-worn binary constructs. In an effort to show how ubiquitous abortion is and to counter stereotypes about who gets abortions, advocates highlight personal testimonies from model citizen women, as well as stories featuring "innocent victims" or "perfect plaintiffs"—in this case, the subjects of the oft-used phrase "victims of rape or incest." Both reinscribe cisgendered (binary) assumptions about who gets pregnant and who is worthy of an abortion, while rape/incest stories can lead to trauma porn through media sensationalism.

A sense of urgency has also been used to justify the backlash against gender-inclusive language post-Dobbs. That backlash is driven not simply by cisgenderism, but by adherence to legalistic, medicalized, and anti-victimist discourses. For instance, Loretta Ross, well-known reproductive justice founder, has argued post-Dobbs against the use of gender-inclusive language: "Using gender-neutral language around pregnancy, abortion and sex discrimination is as damaging as using colorblind language around race discrimination because it fails to identify the targets, the victims and the specificity of the oppression."[6]

That statement demonstrates how easy it is to get caught in a legal framework (and "like race" analogizing) that demands a proper plaintiff that the law will recognize. We become convinced that we cannot name the sexism and misogyny fueling the anti-abortion attacks without standing up the biologically sexed woman (which assumes that's a thing) as our proper plaintiff. Without her, we cannot show sex discrimination, and sex discrimination is what the anti-abortion laws are, or so that argument goes. In the *Ms.* article where they quoted Ross, Carrie N. Baker and Carly Thomsen argue, "the language of 'pregnant people' hides the sex-based impacts of abortion bans . . . Eliminating references to women from our abortion advocacy . . . blocks a potent equality argument against abortion bans."[7] Desiring the state's desire compels us to contort ourselves in uncomfortable ways, ways that push us back into dark closets and the straight-jackets of binary sex-gender normativity.

Medical discourses work in tandem with legal ones as is evident in the persistence of the biological woman as proper subject (of feminism, of feminist legal jurisprudence). Pro-choice advocates advance arguments about fetal viability, ultrasounds, trimesters, high-risk pregnancy, medical abortion, miscarriages, ectopic pregnancy, and so forth. And these arguments are amplified by the sense of urgency about abortion access unleashed by Dobbs (to which many disabled/BIPOC feminists have been responding "welcome to our world" and reminding us, among other things, of decades of impact from the Hyde Amendment). In this political environment, it sounds callous to suggest that this medicalized discourse limits our conceptions of reproductive justice.

Post-Dobbs we have also seen a predictable upsurge in claims to cis-women's fragility and victimhood. These are mobilized through arguments contending that inclusive language is not just ridiculous and unnecessary, but a form of authoritarian misogynist censorship that is erasing "women."[8] Alyson Cole instructs that anti-victimism is a form of "doubling and circuity" whereby

dominant groups “prop ideal forms of true victimhood (and assume the mantle for themselves)” in order to “suppress, negate and erase most victim claims.”[9]

Chase Strangio, Deputy Director for Transgender Justice and staff attorney with the ACLU, argues, “those close to power will often punch down. Those now feeling precarious need to be held to account rather than letting them align with power.”[10] This debate has made it painfully evident how committed many are to maintaining the comfort (another characteristic of white supremacy culture) of current sex-gender binaries, leaving others of us wondering, “do we prioritize privileged people’s slight feeling of awkwardness or discomfort, or do we think about the actual more material effects that some of these words have, and try to remedy that.”[11]

If we are going to strive toward repositioning nonbinary as a freedom practice, we need to push the biopolitical limits of reproductive justice, even in its gender-inclusive invocations. “Pregnant people” and “birthing people” after all evoke a reproductive futurity that too often finds a home in our demands for the future. Is it possible to imagine a liberatory future without fantasizing about the bio-children who will inhabit it? And, insofar as legal and medicalized discourses constrain our politics to legal remedy and medical intervention, we assume the continuance of the repressive state institutions, and the US state itself.

We cannot apprehend governmentality from positions that take the state for granted, now and in the future. So, the larger question seems to be, can we conceive of, and practice, a futurity that is not reproductive of the white supremacist, ableist, heteropatriarchal, capitalist, extractive, carceral, settler state? Moving from this case study of binarism in post-Dobbs responses, in the next section I explore this question by tapping into intersecting queer/crip/Indigenous analysis of biopolitics and biocapitalism. I start with the queer critiques offered by Lee Edelman and José Muñoz and weave in crip and Indigenous analysis. I think we get closer to a reproductive justice, a futurity that

does not simply include more queers/crips/Natives, by centering epistemologies that build worlds that can hold all of us.[12]

Reproductive Justice and Queer/Crip/Indigenous Futurities

"Queer theory has always been a theory of kinship" even when not stated directly,[13] and queer scholar-activists have made generative interventions in unsettling our compulsory devotion to "a better future for the children." This has meant not just challenging heteronormative futurities (Edelman's "heterofuturity"), but also intervening in homonormative narratives featuring lesbian and gay parents as "just like" their straight counterparts. These narratives purport equivalency by obscuring, among other things, the enormous biocapitalist expenses of accessing reproductive technologies/surrogacy/adoption services and legal protections that put prospective non-heterosexual parents in decidedly different positions from procreative straight parents. Queer and trans scholarship have also worked to delink parenting/mentoring/caring for young people not just from birthing, but also from normative family models. This continues to be a heavy lift given the persistence of predatory stereotypes invoking "recruitment" and "grooming"—narratives recently mobilized yet again in "don't say gay" bills.

For all the problems with his argument, Lee Edelman's book *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* helped me think about the need to imagine and build a future without centering "The Child" in a fetishized way.[14] Rather than take up his nihilistic "fuck the future" stance, I found value in his interrogation of reproductive futurity. Jack Halberstam articulated it this way: "No future for Edelman means routing our desires around the eternal sunshine of the spotless child and finding the shady side of political imaginaries in the proudly sterile and antireproductive logics of queer relation."[15]

I further learned from generative critiques coming from queer of color, disability, critical ethnic and Indigenous studies scholars demonstrating how Edelman's critique reproduced the monolithic conception of "The Child" as always already white, settler, able-bodyminded. Muñoz's *Cruising Utopia* contains one of those generative critiques, pointing out the unacknowledged privilege animating Edelman's necropolitics and suggesting instead that "the future is queerness's domain."[16] Layered scholarship has encouraged us to consider the biopolitics and biocapitalism mobilizing by the figure of The Child that justify dispossession, genocide, institutionalization, pathologizing, carcerality of undesirable Others.

While we may be encouraged to think about the various gender-identities of parenting people, we are almost never encouraged to think about those people as disabled or as birthing disabled children, except insofar as those imaginaries facilitate ableist arguments. This, even though, 25 percent of the population lives with one or more disabilities and QTBIPOC and poor people are disproportionately represented in that number.[17] As part of a continuing history of reproductive injustice (including forced sterilization, lack of contraceptive control, denial of sexual identities and practice, institutionalization, state interference with parenting, and so forth), when disability does appear in contemporary debates, it is still most often as something to be avoided or "cured."

Critical disability and crip scholar-activism, which moves beyond the identitarian and rights-based focus of earlier disability studies scholarship, provides an incredibly useful tool in recognizing the ways reproductive futurity and the medical industrial complex (MIC) are reified in post-Dobbs discourse. Over the last decade plus these scholars have invited us to think instead about a "future for crips," a spacetime of "desirable disability," a way to "dream disabled dreams," an embracing of the value and beauty in crip futures and "brilliant imperfections."[18] By cripping futurity, this work refuses "chrononormativity" built "on the smooth rails of normative life stages" (en)abling linear productivity, development, longevity.[19] Speaking into the queer critique of reproductive futurity, Alison Kafer

writes: “Not wanting to cultivate queerness, or to build institutions supporting that kind of cultivation, is intertwined with fears about cultivating disability.”[20]

From this vantage point it is clear that disability is weaponized by both sides of the polarized abortion debate. Understanding this enables us to resist a post-Dobbs politics complicit with reproductive futurity. Disability justice group Sins Invalid points out, “On one hand, the fear of disability has been used as a tool to manipulate people’s reproductive choices, sometimes causing people to opt for selective abortions to avoid disability, which is in fact eugenics. Simultaneously, disabled people have been forced to terminate pregnancies under the pretense that we cannot be good parents because we are disabled.”[21] Or, more concisely, there is a “double lack-of-futurity—disabled children without futures and a future without disability.”[22] Both selective abortion and denial of disabled parenting are predicated on reproductive futurity in which, as Kafer writes, “disability, in other words, becomes the future of no future . . . ”[23]

In “Crip Kin, Manifesting,” Alison Kafer expands this theorizing working across scholarship by Donna Haraway, Kim TallBear, Juana María Rodríguez, Mel Chen, and others who help dislodge bio-children as our only once and future kin. She writes, “Building on scholars who recognize ‘kin’ as encompassing more than the biological, reproductive, legal, and human, I discuss the possibilities of ‘crip kin,’ recognizing the queer possibilities of intimacy with other presences and entities.”[24] Kafer’s crip kin are fantastically disruptive of many of the limiting binaries of heteronormative reproduction: normal/abnormal, human/technology, human/animal, animate/nonanimate, intimate/distant, familiar (family)/strange (stranger), success/failure. One of the artists Kafer introduces us to is Chun-Shan (Sandie) Yi whose “Baby Onsies” invite us to imagine a world welcoming infants with nonnormative limbs (see Figures 1 and 2). Like Yi, Kafer works “collaboratively, recognizing the need for imaginative kin formations that stretch beyond the familial or reproductive.”[25] Kafer’s crip kin frolic far from the fetishized Child of repressive normative futures.

< https://csalateral.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Baby-Onsie-1-jrohrerca.jpg>

< https://csalateral.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Baby-Onsie-2-jrohrerca.jpg>

Figures 1 and 2. Chun-Shan (Sandie) Yi (she/her/hers), "Baby Onsies"

Ensuring that we continue to trouble our theorizations and connect them to lived experience, other scholars have troubled any easy binary between (bad) reproductive futurity and (good) crip futurity. Insisting on a historical materialist analysis, Nirmala Erevelles cautions against abstracting discourses that simply situate disability as "possibility rather than limit," reminding us of all the ways structural oppression helps produce disabling and debilitating conditions for marginalized communities. Jina Kim and others demonstrate how "the constellation of disability/debility/capacity . . . emerges out of necessity from the conditions of settler colonialism, US empire building, the 'work machine,' and the 'war machine' that need 'bodies . . . preordained for injury and maiming.'"[26] Kim's analysis is all the more critical as we witness "the constellation of disability/debility/capacity" emerging from the US-Israel settler colonial attack on Palestinians in Gaza. This includes not just targeted Palestinian death/disability/debility, but the high-tech harvesting of sperm from fallen Israeli soldiers in extraordinary attempts to secure settler futurity.[27]

Adjacent scholarship examines ways the carceral state needs debilitated and disabled, but live, subjects—how it "invests in the animacy of its target with the goal of endless captivity."[28] These interventions stretch our conceptions of crip futurities in their analysis of imperialism, incarceration, and capitalism as not just productive of, but reliant on, debility and disability. Significantly, dominant post-Dobbs responses have given little attention to impacts on those incarcerated in jails, prisons, detention centers or to larger questions about how analysis of disability/debility/capacity stretches reproductive justice into anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, abolitionist orientations.

Sins Invalid and others have declared that "reproductive justice is disability justice." They point to the long history of US attacks on the bodily autonomy of marginalized people and assert "disability justice values an intersectional analysis

which requires us to consider the complexities of reproductive justice in the context of ableism."[29] Explaining how disability justice is an anticapitalist and anticolonial movement, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha writes, "we don't think disabled liberation will happen if a handful of white disabled people get rich and powerful, and we see colonization as being a birthplace of ableism."[30] Or, in the words of multiply-disabled, bisexual, Native, Two-spirit womxn Jen Deerinwater (Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma), "until tribal sovereignty is the law of the land, I will never have full reproductive justice. The colonizer's court will never bring sovereignty."[31]

The colonizer's court has in fact been expressly focused on disrupting and eliminating Native sovereignty and thus Native futures, including through use of medicalized discourses of eugenics, disease, and disorder. Susan Burch's work on the Canton Asylum for Insane Indians (1903–1934) analyzes how pathologization worked systemically to disrupt Indigenous kinship, communities, nations, and therefore, futurity:

By imposing settler forms of medicine and knowledge practices, settler ableism actively serves and reflects broader colonial principles and aspirations . . . Through the lenses of normality, fitness, and competency, settlers have judged Indigenous people and nations. Historically, settlers have interpreted Native people's unwillingness or inability to conform to colonial ideals, such as individuality, heterosexuality, and materialism, as indications of inherent deficiencies or defects.[32]

In studying archival documents and hearing stories from relatives of Native peoples committed to Canton, Burch notes the very different conceptions of health and wellness between those incarcerated and their keepers: "Although tribal systems of medicine and spirituality vary widely, common qualities of well-being are shared by many Native nations, including Dakota people: harmony between body, mind, and spirit as well as between people and the broader natural

and supernatural worlds."[33] This meant that "wellness required ending pathologized dislocation and returning members to their rightful place—physically among their people and physically and metaphysically to an Indigenous world."[34] While "normality, fitness, and competency," Western markers of health, all rely on the binary thinking, being physically and metaphysically in an Indigenous world absolutely disrupts that thinking.

In the settler state's quest to eliminate Native people, pregnancy, birthing, childbearing, and child-raising have all been targeted, making it clear why a more expansive reproductive justice frame is needed. Significantly, Native women in particular have historically resisted surveillance and control.[35] Similar biopolitical machinations (couched firmly in "the best interests of the child" narratives) are currently mobilized in legal attacks on the Indian Child Welfare Act with hopes that a win enables broader assaults on tribal sovereignty (luckily, SCOTUS rejected the constitutional attacks in Brackeen v. Haaland but they will continue). So, settler colonialism feeds itself by pathologizing not just individual ("insane," "sub normal," "incompetent") Natives, but Indigenous kinship practices writ large. The construction of the alcoholic, abusive, poor, dysfunctional Native family has justified dispossession, family separation, sterilization, incarceration in asylums/boarding schools/prison, and non-Native adoptions for centuries.

Kim TallBear (Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate), an Indigenous STS scholar who has been pressing beyond the binaries of kin/not kin, life/not life, monogamy/nonmonogamy for some time, writes, "Perhaps our kinship arrangements are actually culturally, emotionally, financially, and environmentally more sustainable than that nuclear family, two-parent model we are so good at failing at, and that's why we are 'failing.'"[36] There are resonances here with the queer kinships, orientations, and genealogical approaches of Jack Halberstam's *Queer Art of Failure* and Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*.[37] Instead of the "successful" nuclear family, TallBear is interested in "recognizing possibilities of other kinds of intimacies—not focused on biological production and making

population, but caretaking precious kin that come to us in diverse ways—is an important step to unsettling settler sex and family."[38] Fantasizing about "making population" via future bio-children is anathema to TallBear.

Across the continent and the Pacific, Kēhaulani Kauanui (Kanaka Maoli) demonstrates the way colonial biopolitics have played an intimate role in shaping Kanaka Maoli articulations of Hawaiian sovereignty, including through narratives of Hawaiian exceptionalism that operate through a disavowal of indigeneity. Kauanui writes, "the concept of colonial biopolitics illuminates the governing of Indigenous life, death, reproduction, gender, sexuality, relation to land and property, and other sites of state power over both the physical and political bodies of the Hawaiian population."[39] By writing about the "physical and political bodies," Kauanui reminds us that settler futurity relies on the elimination of Native people, kinship, and sovereignty.

Thinking with queer/crip/indigenous kinship and futurities enables complex understandings of how assimilation, recognition, inclusion, internalized oppression, debility, and disavowal, produced by the biopolitics of the state work to disrupt and eliminate nonnormative, unproductive, undesirable life. This assists our capacity to imagine beyond a future of liberal inclusion, to resist the compulsion to desire the state's desire and its naturalized biopolitics of inclusion and exclusion. As the editors of the anthology *Queer Kinship* write, "Kinship is a technique for exclusion and inclusion, and a set of conceptual building blocks for forms of relationality that obviate and lay bare its biopolitical work. Kinship is a domain without which we cannot think in some ways but beyond which we absolutely must think, act, and live."[40] This brief exploration of queer/crip/Indigenous kin-making and their contributions to expansive, nonbinary reproductive justice leads inevitably to thinking otherwise about space and time.

Queer/Crip/Indigenous Spacetime

As we have seen, the biopolitics of reproductive futurity shape decisions in the now which impact life now and generations ahead (human, other-than-human, ancestral, planetary). Thinking about "alternative" futurities matters because it is about who is and is not supposed to inhabit the future. And, we cannot think about queer/crip/Indigenous futurities without considering the spatial and temporal dimensions (spacetimes) from which those futures emerge. Here I focus primarily on Indigenous spacetime for brevity and hope it is suggestive of how queer and crip temporalities also encourage us to imagine more expansive liberatory futurities. I briefly discuss settler temporality before offering theorizations of Indian time and haunting. This section ends with examples of Indigenous analysis of the animacy of place and how genealogical relationships demonstrate long, deep connections to peopleplace (following Donna Haraway's "natureculture," I use this unhyphened term to suggest the indivisibility of the two, to interrupt the binary, to recognize place as relation).

It is so difficult for some of us to imagine queer crip futures because the biopolitics of the state, practiced through the legal system and Medical-Industrial Complex (among other institutions) as highlighted post-Dobbs, is anchored in a naturalized Western teleology that makes desiring "a better future for the children" unquestionable common sense. This progressive teleology also ensures Indigenous people are either nonexistent, vanishing, and/or anachronistic, as most famously articulated in the justification of boarding schools to "kill the Indian, save the man."

Settler temporality "situates white Americans as the privileged subjects of history, resulting in a vicious binary of 'modern' and 'traditional.'"[41] Recognizing the interrelation of spacetime, Indigenous studies scholars mark settler time as "space-time colonialism," "colonial time," and "settler memory." Settler time has sought to eliminate Natives by capturing them as pre-modern/uncivilized/savage,

ontologically unable to exist in modernity – hence, anachronistic or ungrievable "past tense presences."[42] But arguing for inclusion and recognition in modernity accepts the binaries of pre-modern/modern, savage/civilized, not existing/existing that scaffold settler time. Instead, many scholars suggest Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination are generated in a plurality of non-chronological temporalities or "temporal multiplicity."[43]

If settler time marches forward in an "apocalyptic teleology,"[44] unfolding in a naturalized, scientific, measured, straight (and able) line, marking events on chronological timelines (securing The Past, privileging the present, and constraining The Future), Indian time does time differently. It offers temporal multiplicity, as do "POC/queer/crip time." Importantly, these nonnormative ways of "being-in-time" are not recognizable/reducible as the binary opposites of a singular, hegemonic, unitary conception of time. They are inherently queer and unruly. Ellen Samuels and Elizabeth Freeman suggest "crip time isn't easy, it isn't fair, it cannot be reasoned with."[45]

Useful here are Indigenous theorizations of haunting which are absolutely not easy, fair, or reasonable. They gesture toward temporal multiplicity, nonbinary analytics, and nonreproductive generation/futurity, which is important if we are building toward futurities that can hold all of us. "I don't want to haunt you, but I will" is about as far from a plea for inclusion or recognition in settler spacetime as one can get.[46] In fact, "haunting doesn't hope to change people's perceptions, nor does it hope for reconciliation. Haunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop . . . Haunting aims to wrong the wrongs."[47]

In "Before Dispossession, or Surviving it," Angie Morrill (Kalamath), Eve Tuck (Unangax̂), and the Super Futures Haunt Qollective reference "a host of gone peoples," "future ghosts," "fugitive outsiders," and their "visitations," "hauntings," and "afterlives." They write, "when I told you that I will probably haunt you, you

made it about you, but it is about me. The opposite of dispossession is not possession. It is not accumulation. It is unforgetting. It is mattering."[48]

If settler time is bent on dispossession, Indian time is not the reverse. Indian time, conceived of here as haunting, is about the mattering of Indigenous life—ancestors, decedents, all relations. The essay continues, "I am preparing my future haunting. A haunting born and unmoored from horror, before and beyond dispossession. A stateless and constant form of passage. A passage that is always passing. A shady sort of sovereignty."[49] Haunting, as a "constant form of passage," a stateless and "shady sovereignty," insists on futures beyond the settler state big enough to hold on-going Indigenous presence/continuance/mattering that include, but also transcend, embodied beings considered scientifically alive.

These articulations of haunting as Indigenous temporality challenge all white settler feminists to push beyond comfort, fear, and denial (all characteristics of white supremacy culture) without knowing what exists on the other side (which, of course, wrongly assumes there are "sides"). They explode any tidy boxes where we have safely stored our versions of reproductive justice—our neat, complete ideas about the futures we are building and who will inhabit them.

While queer, crip, POC, and Indian time are kin (with all the complicated, messy relations of kin), Indigenous temporalities are intricately interconnected with Indigenous conceptions of peopleplace. So, not only do Indigenous epistemologies disrupt the linear forced march of settler time, but they also upset the violent cartographies of settler spatiality—and critically, they do so by refusing another duality, space/time. "Indigenous duration operates less as a chronological sequence than as overlapping networks of affective connection (to persons, nonhuman entities, and place) that orient one's way of moving through space and time, with story as a crucial part of that process."[50] Rather than the poststructualist genealogical disruption of "there is no there there," this offers

“there was no then then.” In Indigenous spacetimes, peopleplace happenings occur otherwise to Western “there” and “then.”

Thus, many Indigenous people talk about belonging to land, not the other way around. And that belonging is not static or mappable, but relational, reciprocal, developed in temporal multiplicity, as with human relationships. One belongs genealogically, one is known to a peopleplace. This is important because it stretches kinship not just across/through time but with place. Reproductive justice then cannot just be about having/not having, raising/not raising bio-children in a two-dimensional here and now. This alternative orientation is a further invitation in our post-Dobbs era to stretch beyond linear temporality and anthropocentrism, both of which rely on binarism.

Robin Wall Kimmerer (Citizen Potawatomi Nation), notes that in English we use “it” as a pronoun for plants, whereas most Indigenous languages speak of the living world as beings, as relatives, not objectified natural resources for exploitation.[51] Katrina-Ann R. Kapāʻanaokalāokeola Nākoa Oliveiria (Kanaka Maoli) analyzes Kanaka Maoli place-making practices as “performative cartographies” where belonging to place means caring for that particular place, including telling the stories, singing the songs, naming the winds and rains of that unique and living place.[52] This idea of performative cartographies builds on Lilikalā Kameʻeleihiwaʻs (Kanaka Maoli) explanation that “genealogies *are* the Hawaiian concept of time, and they order space around us. Hawaiian genealogies are the histories of our people.”[53] Or, as Chamorro lawyer, and now poet, Julian Aguon suggests, “our stories are maps larger than can be held.”[54]

Pacific Islanders have long argued against land-locked theorizing of spacetime relationships. Tiara Naʻputi (Chamorro) takes Mishuana Goeman’s (Tonawanda Band of Seneca) concepts of “(re)mapping” and “spatial decolonization” to the ocean to “argue for a remapping of the Marianas as expansive, oceanic sites of resistance to colonial cartographic violence and US militarization.”[55] A deep

understanding of these genealogical connections means that reproductive justice must engage decolonial politics (where decolonization is not a metaphor but about Indigenous sovereignty with/on/in the land and water) and should encompass rematriation ("Indigenous women led work to restore sacred relationships between Indigenous people and their ancestral land").[56] It also necessarily means that reproductive justice is intrinsically linked to climate justice and the critical work of intersectional climate futurism.

Desiring Otherwise and the Nonbinary

Thus far we have explored queer/crip Indigenous futurities, the ways they challenge reproductive futurity, and, to the extent that it remains sutured to bio-children, also reproductive justice. That discussion led to consideration of how those futurities emerge from non-dominant spacetimes. Nonbinary thinking is foundational to all of this and so, in this final section, I bring nonbinary thinking back in to reconsider its potentiality and our current state of not being there/then yet. I end with a contemporary queer Indigenous scholar who builds from José Muñoz, (re)turning us toward other horizons.

If binaries trap us in an either/or whereby one pole is valued/positive in contradistinction from the other, the potentiality of the nonbinary is not in either of the two most cited alternatives: the neither/nor and the both/and. Although both of these conceptualizations could be characterized as the opposite of the binary, nonbinariness inherently rejects an opposite, thus the "non" should be understood less as "against" and more as "beyond" or "otherwise." In this way, it is possible to stretch into its potentiality. The nonbinary desires otherwise. The discussions above of queer/crip/Indigenous kin and their spacetimes overflow with the desires of others, with other desires.

Neither/nor says, I see the two choices offered and I am picking neither of them. I am opting out, not playing. Ruthlessly pursued, it can lead to anti-sociality, necropolitics, nihilism. Edelman's *No Future* falls into the neither/nor bucket because it rejects not just the heteronormative temporality (straight time) of reproductive futurity, but also any alternative queer temporality. Edelman is claiming "we will never be queer" because there is no future for queerness.

Both/and is frequently offered as the alternative to binary formulations. This has been the case in much feminist theorizing, and while both/and usefully disrupts the unjust valuation of dichotomized categorization, it does not break the mold. Instead, it says "all of the above," "I'm fully in," "yes to both," but that concedes to there being only two choices. At least, the "both" concedes to a twoness. The "and" might be understood to recognize a continuum between two opposite poles, but that still accepts the frame, doesn't break the mold.

I think this is why "otherwise" has risen in popularity, especially in critical scholar-activist circles. There is nothing prescriptive or predetermined in "otherwise," no neither/nor, no both/and to reject or embrace. It moves across/beyond/sideways to dominant formulations. It does not necessarily reject or refuse them (and it certainly does not embrace them), but instead does its own thing. I think "otherwise" lives in the same wheelhouse with "nonbinary." They both do the work of inviting us outside of normative frames. Nonbinary breaks from polarity into multiplicity, plurality, and messiness. Alison Kafer desires a future for a multitude of queer crip kin. Kim TallBear wants us to consider possibilities of other kinds of intimacies, polyamories, and caretaking relationships outside "making population."

Significantly, the otherwise and beyond of these "alternative" temporalities (shorthanded as queer/POC/crip/Indian time) should not be conceptualized as completely unaffected by dominant temporality and the way that temporality seeks to reproduce normativity. They know it is there, they have been/will be

impacted by it (genocide, colonialism, ableism, racial capital . . .). They are not impervious, unaffected, above it. Jeff Corntassel (Cherokee Nation) writes, "turning away from the state does not mean complete disengagement. It does, however, entail a decentering of the state and other colonial entities by consciously recentering Indigenous nationhood and land-based governance."[57] This turning away from the settler state and toward Indigenous governance is a nonbinary move otherwise. Admitting to being influenced by/oriented by/affected, is part of what distinguishes the otherwise from the complete detachment or break of neither/nor, which is often an exercise in privilege, as per Edelman.

I started with José Muñoz's declaration of an otherwise through the potentiality of queerness that launches *Cruising Utopia*. I circle back through Billy-Ray Belcourt's (Driftpile Cree Nation) ruminations from a lyrical essay entitled "Red Utopia." In his "theoretical polyamory,"[58] Belcourt, a queer Indigenous poet/author/scholar, draws on Muñoz, other queer scholars, affect theory, Black Studies, Chicanx feminisms, Afrofuturism, Critical Race Theory, and Indigenous literatures and studies.[59] Belcourt writes,

> the otherworldly is a core facet of NDN life. In the somewhere/time, in the land of the un-, optimism is neither cruel nor does it get swallowed up in an emotional economy of scarcity. Loneliness, the affective state of being in a world one doesn't want, makes utopia a thinkable concept . . .
>
> How to punctuate an aesthetics of suffering, its visibilization regime, with a counternarrative of NDN possibility? Hypothesis: be negative space.[60]

Belcourt's work manifests otherwise, "agitates ideation" across generative (nonreproductive, nonbinary) somewheres/times, is the warmth of Muñoz's horizon (making "utopia a thinkable concept"), and at the same time, a negative space, the land of the un-.[61]

Belcourt's self-solicitation to "be negative space" is not the opposite of a static positive space, but rather a constantly moving outside, a beyond. NDN

counternarrative is not the authentic/true/innocent flip side of settler narrative. The land of the un- is not a destination, it's not the other direction from colonization, not a nostalgic past, not a prescribed futurity. Insofar as we can apprehend some of its potentiality (kin to, but not the same as, Muñoz's queerness), it might inspire us (settlers) to desire otherwise. But "the land of the un-" isn't sitting still waiting for Belcourt and other queer NDNs to arrive (there is no "late," "early," or "on-time" there anyway), and it certainly isn't waiting, doesn't exist, for settlers. In a separate essay, Belcourt offers that queer Native intellectual production for those who are "in but not of Native Studies" are often "provocations of sorts to do things differently."[62] I think Belcourt's work can also serve as a provocation to white settler feminists aspiring to stretch beyond the binaries that constrain our imagined futurities and do things differently.

Like Belcourt, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Alderville First Nation) is not writing for settlers, but if we do the work, we can learn from her provocations about how we might resist American reproductive futurity. "We are peoples with reciprocal relationships of life, through which we have always ethically shared land, time, and space with plants, animals and other humans, stretching back to the past and reaching forward to coming generations."[63] This is a simple statement containing the unsettling of anthropocentrism (human/non-human), possession (mine/yours), and Western spatiality (here/there) and temporality (past/future). There is no right/wrong place and time, only channels of temporal and spatial interrelation flowing into, out of, over, below, alongside, with each other.

In a conversation with other disabled Indigenous creatives, Kera Sherwood-O'Regan (Kāi Tahu), a disabled Māori artist, said, thinking forward seven generations, she wants "story sovereignty, body sovereignty, and land sovereignty." For her, story sovereignty is about healing, affirming innate worth, and being proud. Body sovereignty includes "disabled bodies, fat bodies, Indigenous bodies, queer bodies." And land sovereignty is an end to the colonial

state, land back to Indigenous tribes, and not having to worry about land being eroded by climate catastrophe.[64] Long time/intergenerational time, emplacement, reciprocity, relationship and story weave through Simpson's and Sherwood-O'Regan's articulations.

Entering conceptualizations of futurity from a different direction, Alison Kafter asks her crip kin, "Can we tell crip tales, crip time tales, with multiple befores and afters, proliferating befores and afters, all making more crip presents possible?"[65] How might considering this influence our desires for more expansive reproductive justice frameworks, more liberatory all-inclusive futurities, far beyond "what's best for the children"? Stretching toward "reciprocal relationships of life" and "proliferating befores and afters" necessarily requires rejecting the violent binaries of white supremacist, settler colonial, capitalist, ableist, heteropatriarchal spacetime.

Building on this, we might consider temporal simultaneity, overlap, circuity, nonlinearity, haunting, multiple origins, generational time. We might consider spatial multiplicity, plurality, undeterminability, unchartability, dynamism, animacy, relation, desire. We might stretch toward horizons otherwise and beyond—that which is out of time and out of place. It is from those elsewhens and elsewheres, those somewheres/times and peopleplaces that alternative kinships, ancestors, other-than human relations live and thrive, refusing compulsory normative reproductivity and doing their own thing.

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